

Whatcom County Council Public Works & Health Committee

**COUNTY COURTHOUSE
311 Grand Avenue, Ste #105
Bellingham, WA 98225-4038
(360) 778-5010**



Committee Minutes - Final

**Tuesday, January 24, 2023
2:30 PM
Hybrid Meeting**

**HYBRID MEETING - ADJOURNS BY 3 P.M. (PARTICIPATE IN-PERSON AT 311
GRAND AVENUE SUITE 101, SEE REMOTE JOIN INSTRUCTIONS AT
www.whatcomcounty.us/joinvirtualcouncil, OR CALL 360.778.5010)**

COUNCILMEMBERS

Carol Frazey
Kaylee Galloway
Kathy Kershner

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Dana Brown-Davis, C.M.C.

Call To Order

Committee Chair Kathy Kershner called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. in a hybrid meeting.

Roll Call

Present: 3 - Carol Frazey, Kaylee Galloway, and Kathy Kershner

Absent: None

Also Present: Barry Buchanan, Tyler Byrd, Todd Donovan, and Ben Elenbaas

Announcements

Special Presentation

1. [AB2022-706](#) Update from Whatcom County Medical Examiner Allison Hunt, M.D.

Allison Hunt, Whatcom County Medical Examiner, presented.

Tyler Schroeder, Director of Administrative Services, answered what is currently budgeted for the Medical Examiner's Office and whether the total contract amount (see AB2022-731) is spread over several years.

Hunt continued the presentation and answered whether she has statistics on deaths over the last year, why there was a steep rise (33 to 405) in reported natural death numbers from 2021 to 2022, whether she has had trouble finding staff, whether she has data about how much tissue donation is occurring now compared to before, whether all death cases get referred for tissue donation even if the person did not give consent to donate tissue, and whether it is her intention to hire staff from Whatcom County instead of from Skagit County.

Schroeder answered whether there is a plan for rolling the Medical Examiner into the County's organization as opposed to it being contracted out, and whether they would still be able to roll it into the County if they approve the budget amendment.

Hunt answered how long a fall stays linked to a person, and whether the coroners of the comparable counties she listed in her presentation are all part of government.

Kershner stated she would appreciate seeing employees from Whatcom County hired under her office and working here.

Hunt answered whether accreditation is another capital request they might be seeing and whether the lack of proper facilities affects our ability to get accredited.

Schroeder answered whether proper facilities would be up and running by 2025. The County needs to look into long-term facilities that meet those accreditations and it is on the County's list. He answered whether it would be worth tacking that on to our new correctional facility with our mental health and substance abuse services.

Hunt answered whether she conducts satisfaction surveys and stated she does not.

This agenda item was PRESENTED.

Items Added by Revision

There were no agenda items added by revision.

Other Business

Galloway stated that in that the Finance Committee they heard from Public Works about the Ferry and recognized that perhaps there was some parallel effort needed to look into the current code that addresses ferry fares. She was hoping they could set aside some time in this committee at the next meeting to have a preliminary discussion of what some of those policy questions might be as they prepare for revising the code.

Kershner stated she has been getting requests from constituents regarding the childcare implementation plan. She has reached out to the Health Department and believes they are going to have an update at next week's Health Board meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:01 p.m.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WA

Kathy Kershner-via email 1/30/2023

Dana Brown-Davis, Council Clerk

Kathy Kershner, Committee Chair

Kristi Felbinger, Minutes Transcription

SIGNED COPY ON FILE